



# California Regional Water Quality Control Board Central Valley Region

Robert Schneider, Chair



Arnold  
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Governor

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Linda S. Adams  
Secretary for  
Environmental Protection

23 August 2006

Mr. Brett Cooper, President  
Coffee Petroleum, Inc.  
24587 Round Mountain Road  
Bakersfield, CA 93308

### **RESPONSE TO COMMENTS – DRAFT CLEANUP & ABATEMENT ORDER, COFFEE PETROLEUM, INC., COFFEE LEASE, ROUND MOUNTAIN OILFIELD, KERN COUNTY**

Regional Water Board staff reviewed your comments dated 14 August 2006, regarding the Draft Cleanup & Abatement Order for the Coffee lease. You contend that: "The Board must consider past, present and future beneficial uses of the produced water. This order does not perform that task." Your letter then proceeds to detail several uses, such as dust control, fire control, aquifer recharge, agriculture, wildlife habitat, household shower and washing, etc., that you consider to be "beneficial uses" of your produced wastewater. You also state that one of your oil wells is being converted to a wastewater injection well. You close by stating that: "It does not allow me the time to pursue other options of water use such as for the proposed State off road vehicle park, ....."

Regional Water Board staff is under no administrative or regulatory obligation that requires consideration of "beneficial uses" of your wastewater as part the deliberations to issue an enforcement order. Regional Water Board staff has; however, on several occasions, met with you and your consultant to discuss the uses you have proposed as well as the benefit of an injection well for your wastewater disposal. To our knowledge, all other oilfield operators in the area discharge their oilfield produced wastewater to injection wells as permitted by the California Division of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources. There are no remaining discharges in the immediate area to unlined sumps.

Regional Water Board staff have in numerous written responses and inspection reports to you and your attorney, replied to and discussed the issues and our concerns in detail regarding how, based on the poor wastewater quality, the wastewater discharges to land do not comply with current State regulations and guidelines. The wastewater concentrations for electrical conductivity, chloride and boron, exceed the numerical limitations contained in the *Water Quality Control Plan for the Tulare Lake Basin Second Edition – 1995* (Basin Plan) and Resolution 71-122 by more than twice. More than 5 years ago, prior to your purchase of the lease in 1998, and ever since, we have provided you with written information explaining how the discharge to the unlined sumps needs to be brought into compliance with Basin Plan policy.

**California Environmental Protection Agency**

Regional Water Board staff fully support your efforts to cease the discharge and achieve compliance by conversion of an existing well to injection disposal. And as we have discussed with you in the past, other options that do not include wastewater discharge to land can be considered in achieving compliance and are not precluded by this proposed Order.

A copy of the tentative Order will be provided to known agencies and responsible parties, and will be sent to you prior to consideration by the Regional Water Board. At this time, we intend to proceed to place the tentative Order on the agenda for the Regional Water Board meeting scheduled for 26 and 27 October 2006.

If you have any questions, please call Douglas L. Wachtell at (559) 445-5114 or contact by e-mail at [dwachtell@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:dwachtell@waterboards.ca.gov).

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cc: Ms. Judy Smoot, Coffee Petroleum, Bakersfield